

Lake Michigan Coastal Program to seek public's advice on 2007 funding allocations at July 19 meeting

The Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program and Coastal Advisory Board will hold a public meeting on 2007 funding-cycle project priorities July 19 in Hobart. The meeting will allow the public and potential grant applicants to provide input on the types of projects to give funding priority.

The meeting will be at Hobart's community center in Festival Park, 111 East Old Ridge Rd., at 6:15 p.m.

Determining priorities is step one in the annual grant cycle. The funds' purpose is to protect land, create education and outreach programs, coordinate regional planning efforts or restore and, where possible, develop coastal resources. In addition, the program seeks to achieve wise use of the land and water resources of the coastal region.

Projects selected using input from the meeting will receive preferential scoring for funding allocation from the grant makers. Recipients are required to spend funds on low-cost construction, land acquisition, and planning and coordination projects.

All projects must be located entirely within the northern portion of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties.

"Planning and coordination are key to making sure that all the stakeholders are involved in developing a complete project," said Mike Molnar, LMCP program manager.

Funding typically goes to area universities, non-profit organizations, and state and local units of government, which implement the projects. Such entities have received almost \$4 million from the program in the last five years.

Priorities for the 2006 funding cycle included (1) natural-area restoration, (2) natural-area preservation, and (3) natural-area management/resource management plans and diagnostic studies. For a complete list of projects receiving funding, see www.in.gov/dnr/lakemich/pdf/projectupdate.pdf.

The Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program gives full consideration to ecological, cultural and historic values, as well as to economic development needs. The program is housed in DNR's division of nature preserves. Funding comes via the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Coastal Resource Management.

For more information please see: www.in.gov/dnr/lakemich or contact Molnar, mmolnar@dnr.in.gov, (317) 233-0132.